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# GREEN MOUNTAIN ZEN CENTER

5014 SUNSET BLUFF DRIVE, HUNTSVILLE, AL 35803

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## Gassho Huntsangha

*E-Mail from Kawa Kongo Jim Gordon*

Folks,

Forgive me for this, but I think I'm about to crow.

I want to say that the tiny little GMZC sangha mustered up a total of six - count 'em - 6 members who sat through long hours and cold weather all night in observance of the anniversary of the Buddha's enlightenment. Thanks to (alphabetically): Ann Jenkins, Eric Beck, Gary Beard, Le Banh, and Shelley Cook-Quinn for coming and staying through a quite intensive sitting schedule. We sat through the 50-minute zazen, 10-minute kinhin periods, with a half-hour break every three hours. No lunches, no samu periods, no Dharma talks, just zazen in all its warty beauty. I'm impressed by, and grateful to, all the participants, as well as to those GMZC people who would have liked to be there but couldn't. As Eric said, though, it's a good thing this happens only once per year, because it may take that

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## Browsing the Internet...

### Buddhism in December issue of National Geographic

I am reading an article on Buddhism in December 2005 issue of National Geographic (apologies for not using Buddhist year). It is quite good, and has some statistics on the number of Buddhists in the world, and by regions. Here are some figures:

World population - 6.5 billion people

Buddhist - 376 million (6%).

Buddhists in Asia - 373 million (98%)

Buddhists in US and Canada - 3.11 million

Buddhists in Europe - 1.64 million

Buddhists in Latin America - 0.71 million

Buddhists in Oceania - 0.5 million

Buddhists in Africa - 0.15 million

I assume that the total number of Buddhists and those in Asia may be a bit low as it may not accurately take into account the number of Buddhists in China.

Have you heard of this story? When I was at Wat Doi Dharmajadee in Northeast of Thailand about 18 years ago, some Buddhist monks told me that either the Buddha or one of the Buddhist masters said that in the future, Buddhism will flourish in the West rather than in the rest of Asia. Now I believe this can be true!

It is a disappointment to see that many Thais who live so close to Buddhism do not give much thought about what the Buddha taught, not as much as they should. But when I see foreigners in Thai monasteries listening to Buddhist teachings, I can see the eager to learn in their eyes.

Posted by Tikaviro on November 12, 2005 05:14 PM | [http://www.findingbuddha.net/2005/11/buddhism\\_in\\_december\\_issue\\_of.htm](http://www.findingbuddha.net/2005/11/buddhism_in_december_issue_of.htm)

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long to get up the enthusiasm to do it again. After about 3 - 4 am, the little space heaters in the zendo were not up to the task of offsetting the twentysomething outside temperatures, and some of us took on the look of a pile of blankets on a zabuton. But the sangha persisted.

Of course this is not all about Huntsville, as we took substantial inspiration from knowing that our Dharma siblings (Gary's term during his talk that night) in Atlanta and elsewhere were going through the same process. Knowing that the ASZC was there sitting with us was in no small part responsible for the "success" of the night. Our thanks and gassho to you.

The GMZC Sangha

## Happy Rohatsu and A Merry New Year!

*December and January Holidays from the Interfaith Calendar*

<http://www.interfaithcalendar.org/>

### DECEMBER 2005

- 4,11,18 Sundays of Advent continue - **Christian**
- 6 St. Nicholas day - **Christian**
- 8 Bodhi Day (Rohatsu) \*\* - **Buddhist**  
Immaculate Conception - **Catholic Christian**
- 12 Feast day - Our Lady of Guadalupe - **Catholic Christian**
- 16-24 Los Posadas - **Christian**
- 21 Yule - **Christian**  
Yule/Winter Solstice \* - **Wicca/Neo Pagan**  
northern hemisphere  
Litha \* - **Wicca/NeoPagan** southern hemisphere  
St. Thomas Day - **Catholic Christian**
- 24 Christmas Eve Day - **Christian**
- 25 Christmas \* - **Christian**  
Feast of the Nativity \*\* - **Orthodox Christian**

- 26-January 2 Hanukkah \* (begins eve of 25th) - **Jewish**
- 26 Zarathosht Diso (Death of Prophet Zarathushtra) **Zoroastrian**  
St. Stephen's Day - **Christian**
- 28 Holy Innocents - **Christian**
- 30 Feast of the Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
- 31 Watch Night - **Christian**

### JANUARY 2006

- 1 Mary, Mother of God - **Catholic Christian**  
Feast Day of St Basil - **Orthodox Christian**  
Shogatsu/Gantan-sai (New Years) - **Shinto**
- 5 Twelfth Night - **Christian**  
Guru Gobindh Singh birthday - **Sikh**
- 6 Epiphany - **Christian**  
Feast of the Epiphany (Theophany) - **Orthodox Christian**  
Dia de los Reyes (Three Kings Day) - **Christian**
- 7 Feast of the Nativity - **Orthodox Christian**
- 8 Baptism of the Lord Jesus - **Christian**  
Waqf al Arafa - **Islam**  
Feast of the Holy Family - **Catholic Christian**
- 10 Eid al Adha - **Islam**
- 13 Maghi - **Sikh**
- 14 Mahayana Buddhist New Year - **Buddhist**
- 15 World Religion Day - **Baha'i**
- 17 Blessing of the Animals - **Hispanic Catholic Christian**
- 25 Conversion of St. Paul - **Christian**
- 29 Chinese New Year - **Confucian/Daoist/Buddhist**
- 31 Hijra - New Year - **Islam** ◇

## Question Box

*A Spot for the Curious*

When not in zazen, when do you notice your breath?  
What activity or non-activity are you doing?

Email your reply to:

[Shelley.a.quinn@comcast.net](mailto:Shelley.a.quinn@comcast.net)

Replies to be posted in the January issue. ♦

## ZAZEN SERVICES

SUNDAY SERVICES AT 7:00 PM TO 8:30PM

WEDNESDAY SERVICES WILL RESUME AFTER THE  
HOLIDAYS

### NEWCOMERS' INSTRUCTION :

THE SECOND SUNDAY OF THE MONTH  
AT 6:00 PM

### DHARMA DISCUSSION GROUP:

DECEMBER 18<sup>TH</sup>, 2005  
AT 6:00 PM

DHARMA DISCUSSION AND TELECONFERENCE WITH *TaiUn*  
MICHAEL ELLISTON, ABBOTT, ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER  
TEXT: HAKUIN'S "SONG OF ZAZEN"

### LOOKING FORWARD:

MAY 12 - 14, 2006  
WEEKEND SESHIN  
FEATURING GUEST TEACHER *TaiUn* MICHAEL ELLISTON  
ABBOTT, ATLANTA SOTO ZEN CENTER

### CONTACT JIM GORDON FOR MORE INFO:

(256) 882-0513 (HOME)  
(256) 426-3344 (CELL PHONE)

### OR GO TO THE WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.GMZC.US](http://www.gmzc.us)

## A Buddhist Christmas Story

Found this [Christmas Story from the Lotus Sutra](#) at the Manitoba Buddhist Church site.

One time a young man inherited 4 farms from his father. He also married his childhood sweetheart. He celebrated his good fortune by building a great house with servants and many rooms.

As the children were born the man bought many toys. He filled the children's rooms with toys of many colors and sizes. The children loved to play for hours in their nursery.

One day a fire broke out in the house. The father shout, "Run everybody." Naturally he expected his children to run out of the house with them. But they didn't follow the mother and father outside to safety. The parents called and called to the children, but they did not want to leave their wonderful toys. A neighbor who had come to help out with the fire suggested that they lure the children outside with more new toys. "But we don't have any," said the father. "We'll just make them up," suggested the tear faced mother as the flames grew hotter and hotter.

"Come on out," shouted the father and mother together. "We have horses, carts, jumping frogs, mechanical dolls, bows and even a monkey."

The children left the burning house and their beloved toys to see the new ones and thus were saved. When the smoke cleared from their eyes they saw the house destroyed. They also noticed that there were really no new toys to be seen at all. For the first time in their lives they knew what it was to have nothing and be very grateful indeed.

Also see, [What to get a Buddhist for Xmas](#) (Tom has a recommendation here)

December 02, 2005 in [Stories & Koans](#) |  
[http://www.woodmoorvillage.org/2005/12/a\\_buddhist\\_chri.html](http://www.woodmoorvillage.org/2005/12/a_buddhist_chri.html) ♦

## Miscellaneous

### Zen Center of Asheville

<http://zcasheville.org/index.htm>



[www.aszc.org](http://www.aszc.org)

### Clouds in Water Zen Center: Dharma Talks

<http://www.cloudsinwater.org/dharmatalk.htm>

### Wood Moor Village Zendo

<http://www.woodmoorvillage.org/>